

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

# Smart Parenting

UNIVERSITY OF MISSOURI EXTENSION ■ NOVEMBER 2011

### MyPlate Resources

For more information about the MyPlate pattern of healthy eating, go to this website

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

In addition to information on MyPlate, there is a link to "Get A Personalized Plan" in the right hand column. You can enter your age, gender, weight, height and activity level and get an individual pattern for healthy eating.

Improve your diet as a parent and your child will have a better diet as well.

Preschooler Information has not yet been updated to reflect the MyPlate graphic. You can check this site periodically to see if additional information has been posted.

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/preschoolers/index.html>

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## Eating for the Health of It

### *MyPlate graphic helps you visual food choices*

Recently released by USDA, the MyPlate graphic is meant to help us eat for better health. Every 10 years, nutrition and health science is evaluated and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans are revised. The 2010 Guidelines are the best science-based advice on how to eat for health.

"The Guidelines encourage us to eat a healthy diet and be physically active," according to Glenda Kinder, MU Extension nutrition and health specialist. Improving what you eat and being active will help to reduce your risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease.

Because more than one-third of children and more than two-thirds of adults in the US are overweight or obese, the 2010 Guidelines place stronger emphasis on reducing calorie consumption and increasing physical activity.

By choosing MyPlate as a pattern for your meal plan, you will be making healthier choices on meal by meal basis.

The MyPlate pattern is to make  $\frac{1}{2}$  of our plate fruit and vegetables. We also need to choose more red, orange, and dark-green vegetables like tomatoes, sweet potatoes, and broccoli and other brightly colored vegetables more often. These contain anti-oxidant compounds that prevent disease.

One-fourth of MyPlate is for grain foods, and half of those should be in a whole grain product, i.e. whole-wheat bread or brown rice, instead of a refined product,

like white bread or white rice.

One-fourth of MyPlate is for lean protein foods. Fatty meats like ribs, sausages, bacon and hot dogs should not be everyday foods. The way meats are prepared also matters; bake, boil or broil lean cuts. Frying foods or cooking in high fat sauces should be rarely used.

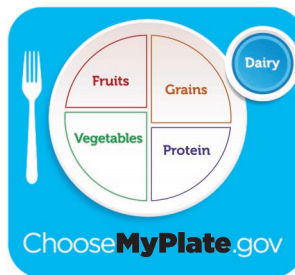
Switch to fat-free or low-fat (1%) milk. They have the same amount of calcium and other essential nutrients as whole milk, but fewer calories and less saturated fat.

Take time to fully enjoy eating. Eating too fast or when your attention is elsewhere may lead to eating too many calories. Pay attention to hunger and fullness cues before, during and after meals. Use them to recognize when to eat and when you've had enough. Use smaller plates, bowls, and glasses, to portion out foods better and avoid oversized portions.

Compare sodium levels in food you buy by using the Nutrition Facts label. Look for lower sodium versions of foods like soup, bread, and frozen meals and other processed foods.

Finally, instead of the sugary beverages, cut calories by drinking water instead. Soda, energy drinks, and sports drinks are a major source of added sugar, and calories, in American diets.

Choosing MyPlate will lead to a healthier lifestyle for your family and you.





# Safe Ways to Cook Ahead

*Planning ahead with meal preparation and party plans can help tame the stress of the holiday season*

“Use the following tips to get a head start on your holiday cooking and baking,” shares Susan Mills-Gray, MU Extension nutrition and health specialist.

- ◆ Slightly undercook prepared foods that will be reheated to help avoid overcooking, especially for dishes containing some type of pasta.
- ◆ Cool foods to be frozen quickly. Cool hot prepared foods such as main dishes and sauces quickly in their original pan placed in a large pan, in a sink filled with ice water. Add ice frequently. You can also place the cooked item, in a room temp shallow dish, directly into the refrigerator to cool.
- ◆ Prepared food may be frozen directly in the casserole or baking dish. If the dish has a cover, it can be used. However, it's important to first put a layer of plastic wrap directly on the food surface to prevent moisture loss and seal the edges with freezer tape.
- ◆ Straight-sided dishes can be freed for other uses by lining them with heavy-duty foil before filling. After the product has been prepared, remove it from the dish by transferring the foil lining. Finish wrapping and freeze. Use the same dish to later reheat and serve the food.
- ◆ Cold glass dishes may break if put into a preheated oven unless the dish is freezer to oven safe.
- ◆ Cheese and crumb toppings for casseroles should be added when the dish is being reheated to serve, otherwise they become soggy.
- ◆ When reheating, use the oven setting at which the dish was originally cooked. Start with less than double the original cooking time (i.e. casserole originally cooked for 30 minutes; start with reheating for about 50 minutes).

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## Help Kids Cope with Hectic Holidays

Keep your holidays joyous with some planning. “Too many parents dread the holidays because they are hectic. Think ahead, plan ahead and enjoy your family,” encourages Lisa Wallace, MU Extension human development specialist.

**Keep kids involved.** Keep your children busy by having them help address cards, bake cookies or create a handmade gift.

**Set up rules ahead of time.** Before you go anywhere tell your kids what you expect from them. You might say, “You can only have one dessert at the party,” or “We’re going shopping, but we’re not going to buy any toys for you today. We’re buying gifts for your cousins, and I really need you to help me pick them out.”

**Keep up routines.** With so

much going on, it's hard to make sure kids go to bed, eat dinner or do homework at a regularly scheduled time. Structure is very important to kids, and routines help them handle the excitement of the season.

**Don't wait for a meltdown.** If your child gets fussy, take a break. Divert her attention by singing a holiday carol. It's easier to settle kids who are just starting to get uncomfortable than those in the middle of a full-blown tantrum.

**Have kids create family traditions.** Children have great imaginations. Ask them to come up with a holiday-related activity that the entire family can enjoy. Start by asking them what they liked about past holidays and what new things they'd like to try this year. If your little ones are stumped for ideas, offer

activities that promote peace and unity, such as having your family light a candle and be silent together for three to five minutes every night in December. Calming traditions like this one will help soothe kids when their routines are upended.

**Do less.** Decide what's really important to you this holiday season and make that your priority. Remember, you cannot do it all. Don't try. One of the easiest ways to keep your child stress-free is to make sure *you* are not stressed.

**Enjoy!** Remember your children are young for a short time. Celebrate their enthusiasm and innocence and remember the reason for the season.

